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Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa

Progress report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted in compliance with General Assembly resolution 56/37 of 4 December 2001, on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa. The report updates the information contained in the progress report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General submitted to the General Assembly in November 2001 at its fifty-sixth session (A/56/371).

Section II of the present report describes specific follow-up action that has been initiated or completed in the areas of peace and security. Section III contains a broad overview of recent developments or activities in the areas of governance and sustainable development in Africa. Section IV presents some concluding observations underlining the need for the international community to support the efforts of African countries to sustain the reform of their economic and political systems.

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I. Introduction

1. The report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871-S/1998/318), which was considered by the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, contained a number of specific as well as broad recommendations on issues ranging from peacemaking, peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building to growth, sustainable development and the mobilization of resources for Africa's development. The report stressed the link between peace and development and advanced a comprehensive and holistic approach to conflict prevention, poverty eradication and sustainable development in Africa.

2. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 53/92 of 7 December 1998, an open-ended ad hoc working group of the General Assembly was established to monitor the implementation of the recommendations contained in the 1998 report of the Secretary-General. The Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa held substantive sessions in 2000 and 2001, and its reports (A/55/45 and A/56/45) were considered by the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth and fifty-sixth sessions respectively. By resolution 56/37 of 4 December 2001, the Assembly endorsed some of the recommendations of the Working Group and decided to suspend the activities of the Working Group during the fifty-sixth session of the Assembly in order to consider further measures for the implementation and monitoring of initiatives on Africa. However, it decided to continue to monitor the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General and requested him to submit to the Assembly at its fifty-seventh session a comprehensive report on the implementation of the recommendations and to designate the already established interdepartmental/inter-agency task force as the permanent focal point within the Secretariat mandated to monitor the implementation of the recommendations contained in his report. The Under-Secretary-General, Special Adviser on Africa, has been designated to chair the task force.

3. Submitted in compliance with resolution 56/37, the present report updates the information contained in the progress report of the Secretary-General (A/56/371). Section II describes specific follow-up action that has been initiated or completed in the areas of peace and security. Section III contains a broad overview of recent developments in the areas of governance and sustainable development in Africa and section IV presents some concluding observations underscoring the need for the international community to support the efforts of African countries to sustain the reform of their economies.

II. Responding to situations of conflict

4. Since the last progress report, further advances have been made in the implementation of the recommendations contained therein in a wide range of areas. A detailed description of the progress achieved is contained in an updated matrix prepared in compliance with paragraph 10 of resolution 56/37.[1] The highlights below are indicative of that progress.

A. Peacemaking

Appointing special mediators or special commissions to look into the sources of dispute, build confidence, and recommend practical solutions

5. The Secretary-General has continued to appoint special envoys and representatives to prevent or manage and resolve conflicts in the affected countries (Angola, Burundi, Central African Republic, Ethiopia and Eritrea, Guinea-Bissau, Somalia, Sudan) and to work closely with regional arrangements to help to mediate conflicts. He has consistently encouraged Governments in conflict countries to have direct contact with warring parties with a view to facilitating dialogue and ending conflicts. Recognizing the highly volatile situation in the Mano River Union countries of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, in November 2001, the Secretary-General made a commitment to assist the efforts of the member States to reactivate the Union. In this regard, a plan of action has been developed by an inter-agency working group in support of confidence-building measures agreed by the three countries in the Union. In addition, United Nations departments and organizations[2] have helped African countries to build a spirit of peace and reconciliation by providing positive inducements including, inter alia, an improved water supply, the "Food for Assets" projects, the "Imagine Coexistence" programme, a local infrastructure,

economic livelihood programme, and skills-upgrading centres to train young persons and ex-combatants.

Avoiding a proliferation of mediation efforts

6. Whenever a mediation effort has been launched by a Member State or by a regional or subregional organization, every effort is made by the Secretary-General and senior United Nations officials to extend support to that effort rather than engage in a parallel initiative. The more recent examples of such efforts are in Madagascar and the Mano River Union countries. For Somalia, the Secretary-General has established a contact group of relevant countries to promote coherent policy approaches and to consolidate support for peace and reconstruction. With regard to the peace mediation in Angola, the United Nations is recognized as the sole mediator under the Lusaka Protocol.

Mobilizing international support for peace efforts

7. Progress in this area has been rather slow in terms of fulfilling the pledges made by donors during the special donor conferences for Burundi in 1999 and the Central African Republic in 2000, despite the time and energy expended to plan and hold them. Since donor pledges during the conference were not followed up, the implementation of programmes of the United Nations system which had already been approved was severely hampered. As promoter of a women's common agenda for peace, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) supported a women's "Peace Table" to engender the draft peace agreement.

Improving the effectiveness of sanctions

8. The increasing concern at the potential negative effects of sanctions regimes on vulnerable civilian populations prompted the Security Council to request assessments of the possible humanitarian implications of such coercive measures. Within the United Nations Secretariat, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs was mandated to make the assessments and to draft the relevant reports of the Secretary-General to the Security Council, such as his report in pursuance of paragraph 3 (a) of resolution 1343 (2001) concerning Liberia (S/2001/939). The concept of targeted or "smart" sanctions has emerged in response to such concerns and the need to make sanctions less blunt and more effective instruments. Sanctions against the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) succeeded in weakening its military capacity, thus contributing to peace in Angola. Security Council resolution 1343 (2001) on Liberia, which imposes a travel ban on Government officials and other individuals, can also be considered a good example of targeted sanctions. While monitoring and follow-up assessment missions to investigate compliance by Governments with sanctions regimes are among the ways to improve the effectiveness of sanctions, assessments of the potential economic and humanitarian impact of the sanctions on the civilian population should also be included. **This requires improving United Nations capacity to monitor compliance with the demands of the Security Council resolution on Liberia. The effectiveness of sanctions can be also improved if arms-exporting countries exercise the highest degree of responsibility and restraint in engaging in small arms and light weapons transactions, to prevent illegal markets in the region.**

Stopping the proliferation of arms, reducing the purchase of arms and munitions to below 1.5 per cent of gross domestic product while attaining a zero-growth budget for military expenditure

9. To stop the proliferation of arms, some West African countries have decided to set up joint patrols along their common borders to prevent cross-border trafficking in arms. In the framework of a small arms reduction project in the Great Lakes region, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) fielded an assessment mission in March 2002 to map out the scope, nature and development impact of small arms use and proliferation in the subregion, with a view to developing a well-defined strategy for further regional programme operations, as well as to working out appropriate strategies, modalities and implementation requirements for the respective national programmes. The 15 member States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) took a decision in July 2001 to renew the Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa (A/53/763-S/1998/194, annex). The Moratorium, supported by the international community, including the organizations of the United Nations system through the regional Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development, assists the ECOWAS Executive

Secretariat in the process. Eight African countries have already established national commissions to tackle the issue of small arms proliferation.

10. Some African countries are reducing their military expenditure as recommended in the report of the Secretary-General. The defence budget in Angola was reduced in 2001 for the first time and additional funds were allocated to the social sector. However, defence spending in many African countries remains well above the target of 1.5 per cent of GDP recommended in the report. The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the system for standardized reporting on military matters, including transparency in military expenditures, are the two arms transparency instruments of the United Nations in which participation is voluntary. African States' participation in the Register is the lowest among the regions of the world. The latest available data show that only 4 out of 53 African countries have contributed to the Register. Concerted efforts are needed to encourage African countries to participate in these voluntary instruments. **The Department for Disarmament Affairs of the Secretariat could facilitate the holding of workshops or seminars at the regional and subregional levels in Africa with a view to achieving greater participation in and enhancing familiarity with the Register and its procedures. In accordance with resolution 56/14, the Secretary-General may wish to urge Member States to provide annual data on military expenditure to enable the Department to consolidate and publish the information. The Secretary-General, through the United Nations/Organization of African Unity (OAU) cooperation framework may also wish to encourage African regional and subregional organizations to stimulate greater openness, confidence and transparency in the region, and thereby promote greater participation in the Register. In the same vein, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa can also play a significant role in this process.**

B. Peacekeeping

Role of the United Nations in peacekeeping in Africa

11. The United Nations, together with OAU and subregional organizations, has continued to play an important role in the management, mediation and resolution of conflicts in Africa. It has assisted in the implementation of ceasefire agreements, created an environment for the promotion of national reconciliation and laid the basis for peaceful development activities. Today, the United Nations operates four peacekeeping missions in Africa, including the largest, the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), with another major operation being fully deployed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, namely the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC).

12. In his 1998 report, the Secretary-General stressed the need for the United Nations to re-examine its role in peacekeeping and to extract lessons from peacekeeping experiences in Africa. The Peacekeeping Best Practices Unit of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations is developing a manual for multidimensional peacekeeping, based on past peacekeeping experiences and good practices, which will serve as a useful training tool for all troop-contributing countries for United Nations peacekeeping operations. In addition, the Unit will be working with other national defence and academic institutions to study and draw lessons from the experiences in the United Nations missions in Ethiopia/Eritrea and Sierra Leone. **The Secretariat may wish to follow up on the proposed lessons learned workshop with OAU for sharing experiences with regional and subregional organizations.**

13. Some of the recent multidimensional peacekeeping operations (UNAMSIL, MONUC) comprise various civilian components dealing, inter alia, with political aspects, human rights, law and order and the protection of civilians. UNAMSIL has contributed to the stabilization of Sierra Leone, throughout the country, including the provision of security, the restoration of state authority, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, and human rights and reconciliation initiatives. It assisted in the recently held national elections and is also helping the country to establish a truth and reconciliation commission. The appointment of a second Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Sierra Leone, serving as both Humanitarian and Resident Coordinator, has provided a framework for greater collaboration and consensus among humanitarian, peacekeeping and development

initiatives. In 2001, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) continued to work with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and other relevant United Nations entities on peace-building initiatives, specifically with MONUC, on the separation of armed elements in Zongo, Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Supporting African initiatives to resolve disputes

14. The United Nations is increasing cooperation with OAU (on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Madagascar, the Central African Republic) and ECOWAS (on the Mano River Union countries and Guinea-Bissau) in peacemaking and peace-building. The United Nations recently established the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa in support of ECOWAS efforts to promote peace and stability in the subregion. It actively supports the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) peacemaking efforts in the Sudan, and the efforts of the Facilitator for the inter-Congolese dialogue. The close cooperation between ECOWAS and UNAMSIL on all aspects of peace efforts has proved useful in advancing the peace process in Sierra Leone. UNIFEM is supporting IGAD in the integration of a gender perspective in its conflict resolution and humanitarian programmes through a number of capacity-building initiatives. The African Women's Committee on Peace and Development established within OAU and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), and the Mano River Women's Peace Network are some concrete examples of women's ongoing efforts to help peace processes in Africa.

Protecting civilians in situations of conflict

15. The mandate of some United Nations peacekeeping missions in Africa includes the protection of civilians facing imminent threat in areas of deployment. UNAMSIL has a human rights section with a monitoring and reporting team at its headquarters in Freetown assisted by human rights officers in the regions. The National Commission for War-affected Children has been set up in Sierra Leone. The establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Special Court for Sierra Leone will assist in addressing some important concerns of national reconciliation and impunity with regard to crimes committed during the Sierra Leone conflict. The growing cooperation between MONUC and United Nations bodies (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) has helped to improve reporting of human rights abuses and to mobilize support for the protection of war-affected civilian populations and provide emergency assistance and to create adequate conditions for reinsertion. MONUC is working with the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to develop a national plan of action for human rights.

16. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) monitors the preparation and submission, under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, of reports to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Half of the African countries have signed the two Optional Protocols to the Convention, on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, and on the involvement of children in armed conflict. The demobilization of child soldiers has been realized in five countries. Under terms agreed by the Government of the Sudan and the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), "zones and days of tranquility" have been established in southern Sudan for emergency humanitarian assistance and polio vaccinations. Also an agreement has been reached to end the targeting of civilians in the conflict. Two vaccination campaigns took place successfully in 2001 and the parties to the conflict observed a truce during that period. At United States Senator Danforth's initiative on 22 January 2002, the conflicting parties in the Sudan signed a six-month ceasefire agreement for the Nuba Mountains region, and an agreement on the protection of unarmed civilians against military attack countrywide. They also agreed to facilitate humanitarian assistance through the opening of humanitarian corridors, thus enabling agencies to deliver food to the conflict areas.

Addressing refugee security issues

17. In January 2001, UNHCR launched the Global Consultations on International Protection, aimed, inter alia, at revitalizing the refugee protection regime and developing new approaches to strengthen protection in areas not fully covered by the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. The first Ministerial Meeting of States Parties to the Convention and the 1967 Protocol thereto, held in December 2001, focused on Africa. States parties committed themselves to

implementing the Convention by strengthening asylum and rendering protection more effectively, and reiterated the need to further develop international cooperation. To support the efforts of the Government of Angola to incorporate Norms on the Resettlement of the Internally Displaced into legislation and policy at the national level, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs conducted extensive training programmes on protection for internally displaced persons for State and non-State actors, designed to provide a solid basis for long-term and lasting respect for principles of international humanitarian law in the process of national reconciliation. The programmes resulted in the mapping out of 14 concrete Provincial Protection Plans by March 2002.

18. In order to address the special needs and vulnerabilities of women and children in conflict situations, UNHCR continues to mainstream gender activities in its programmes at all levels, including the deployment of gender advisers as part of the emergency response teams in Guinea and Sierra Leone to ensure that emergency operations are gender sensitive. The African Position, which was adopted at the OAU Pan-African Forum on the Future of Children, held in Cairo in May 2001, underlined the need for special measures for the protection of children, including their access to humanitarian assistance. The Declaration and the Plan of Action of the special session of the General Assembly on children held in New York in May 2002 also reaffirmed the commitment of world leaders to promoting and protecting the rights of children and enabling them to develop in an environment of peace and security.

19. Mitigating the economic, social and environmental impact of refugees on host countries is also an important issue, especially for low-income countries in Africa hosting large numbers of refugees. In Guinea, a joint initiative among UNHCR, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and non-governmental organizations to design intervention strategies to protect the environment of farming areas and refugee camps has begun. UNHCR and the Japan International Development Agency have agreed to pilot a reconstruction project in the Kigoma region of the United Republic of Tanzania to alleviate the social and economic impact of mass refugee populations following voluntary repatriation. The World Bank supports the rehabilitation efforts of several countries hosting large numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons, such as Guinea and the Republic of the Congo, through a series of credits and projects for economic rehabilitation, education, infrastructure and community development. However, donor response to the needs of internally displaced persons and refugees in Africa remains inadequate.

C. Post-conflict peace-building

Emergency assistance to reconstruction and development

20. The United Nations Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) is a strategic planning tool that promotes the transition from relief to development, through developing the linkages between CAP and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. In Guinea, poverty reduction strategies are linked to humanitarian priorities in the West Africa CAP for 2002. The World Bank, in collaboration with donor and agency partners, has initiated a comprehensive regional disarmament, demobilization and reintegration strategy and programme for ex-combatants in the greater Great Lakes region of Central Africa. The programme, at an estimated cost of $500 million could potentially demobilize and reintegrate 350,000 ex-combatants in the subregion. In May 2002, the World Bank's Board of Executive Directors approved a $60 million credit for a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme for ex-combatants in Eritrea to help the country to reverse the economic and social slowdown due to the recent conflict.

21. In September 2001, the World Bank, UNHCR and UNDP launched a post-conflict rehabilitation project in Rwanda to bridge the gap between emergency relief and post-conflict development. In 2001, the FAO Emergency Service mobilized $37 million for 26 African countries affected by conflicts, or by natural disasters during a post-conflict phase. The International Organization for Migration provided transportation assistance to over 807,000 returnees. The African Development Bank, together with UNHCR, has initiated emergency reconstruction and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes in Eritrea to facilitate the smooth transition from reintegration to sustainable development. Similar joint activities are envisaged in the Mano River Union countries and in Zambia.

Establishing post-conflict peace-building support structures and creating the preconditions for reconstruction and development

22. Peace-building elements have been identified and incorporated in the mandate of several peacekeeping operations. As the mandate of UNAMSIL draws to an end, the United Nations Country Team is finalizing a strategy for the transition from humanitarian assistance to support for national recovery and peace-building in Sierra Leone. In his fourteenth report to the Security Council on UNAMSIL, the Secretary-General is to propose a plan for post-conflict support for Sierra Leone. Phase III of MONUC deployment, principally the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, is also part of the implementation of the recommendations related to post-conflict priorities, as it seeks to create social and economic conditions favourable to the reinsertion of ex-combatants. Acting as a facilitator in support of national efforts to consolidate and maintain peace and stability, the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS) has been instrumental in helping the Government to elaborate a programme for the voluntary collection of arms and explosives held illegally by civilians. Security and the proliferation of small arms in the subregion are of great concern to the Government of the Central African Republic. In this regard, the Government and the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA), in collaboration with UNDP, initiated a disarmament programme to collect arms held illegally by civilians and irregular groups and to reintegrate ex-combatants. With the end of civil conflict in Angola, international support for post-conflict peace-building in that country will need to be mobilized to avoid relapse into conflict.

23. In 2001, FAO supported the reintegration of ex-combatants into civilian life in Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo by providing them with agricultural kits for economically productive activities. The International Labour Organization, in collaboration with the Government of Angola, has completed an employment reintegration programme for Angola. In 2001, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization initiated, inter alia, projects such as "Armed Forces and Democracy in Africa", aimed at raising awareness through education for citizenship, and "Women and a Culture of Peace", providing financial and technical support to the Mano River Women's Peace Network. The World Bank is supporting the preparation of interim or full Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers in countries in post-conflict transition, such as Angola, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Burundi, Rwanda and Sierra Leone, to help them to establish development priorities and mobilize resources for poverty reduction and development activities. UNDP is providing a grant to the police in Sierra Leone to establish a community arms collection programme which emphasizes both capacity-building and licensing.

Providing for peace-friendly structural adjustment programmes

24. Acting on recommendations in this area and as a result of post-conflict situations that have been referred to the United Nations, the Secretary-General has maintained constructive dialogue with the Bretton Woods institutions. In the Central African Republic and Guinea-Bissau, this dialogue has often prompted these institutions to strike a balance between the reforms necessary and the peace-building needs of these two post-conflict countries. The World Bank has financed social funds with a community-driven development approach in Angola, Burundi, Eritrea, Rwanda and Sierra Leone with support for microprojects benefiting refugees, displaced persons, ex-combatants and other vulnerable groups. **In view of the special circumstances and needs of post-conflict countries, the Secretary-General may wish to encourage the Bretton Woods institutions to consider more flexible and effective measures for their re-engagement in post-conflict countries, including relaxing some of the stringent conditionalities concerning economic performance, scaling up post-conflict funds, special assistance for reconstruction and poverty reduction interventions. Similarly, the Secretary-General may wish to urge other creditors and donors to provide support for post-conflict African countries.**

III. Building durable peace and encouraging sustainable development

A. Promoting good governance

Promoting transparency and accountability in public administration

25. Relevant United Nations organizations have continued to support African countries in building and strengthening their capacity in public sector management, including by establishing codes and indicators for monitoring good governance and providing technical support and training to government anti-corruption commissions. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in cooperation with the African Training and Research Centre in Administration for Development, has helped to develop the Charter for the Public Service in Africa, which was adopted in Namibia in February 2002 by high-level officials from 40 African countries. The Department, with financial assistance from UNDP, also compiled comparative information on current legislations, policies, programmes and practices in 10 African countries, with a view to highlighting gaps and best practices which can serve as a basis for introducing new or improving existing ethics practices and programmes at the national level. Despite the various efforts, progress in this area has been rather slow.

Enhancing administrative capacity

26. Organizations of the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, are continuing to assist African countries, especially those affected by conflict, in building and strengthening their capacities in the administration and management of their economies. Under the umbrella of the Partnership for Capacity-Building in Africa, the International Monetary Fund is planning to establish five regional technical assistance centres, two of which are to be set up by mid-2002. The aim is to improve significantly the capacities of key public institutions in financial and macroeconomic management, provide for transparent and accountable government and provide help in related areas of the Fund's expertise. ECA is developing indicators for measuring good governance. UN-Habitat has launched a global campaign for good urban governance and is supporting training for regional and municipal officers and elected leaders in African countries. In Sierra Leone, UNDP is helping the Government to develop a new framework for local governance and decentralization and is providing direct support to revitalize local government administrations in what were rebel-held territories. Similarly, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, working with UNDP and the Government of Liberia, has supported the development of a good governance framework, undertaken assessments in key government institutions and promoted national dialogue on good governance in a post-conflict situation.

B. Sustainable development

Creating a positive environment for investment and economic growth

27. Investment in small and medium-sized enterprises in Africa needs particular attention as they are an important source of employment. In 2001, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) supported 14 integrated programmes of technical assistance for entrepreneurship development training in sub-Saharan Africa, with a focus on investment promotion and the business development components of small and medium-sized enterprises. In 2001, allocations from the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) for investment and technology promotion in sub-Saharan Africa amounted to about $4.4 million and $4.6 million was allocated to the development of small and medium-sized enterprises. The UNDP regional programme "Enterprise Africa", currently operating in 13 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, aims to facilitate and support the development of small and medium-sized enterprises, including facilitating access to credit and providing Governments with policy advice on enterprise development.

28. UNCTAD is assisting a number of African countries in investment policy reviews to familiarize public and private investors with the countries' investment environment and policies. Such policy reviews have been implemented in Egypt, Ethiopia, Mauritius and Uganda, and are in progress in a number of other African countries. The joint UNCTAD-International Chamber of Commerce project on investment guides and capacity-building for least developed countries, which aimed to attract more foreign direct investment, was completed in four African countries in 2001. The availability of

infrastructure, including air transport, is an important element for a country's drive to attract private investment, including foreign direct investment. The International Civil Aviation Organization has promoted the development of airports, the provision of air navigation services and the training of civil aviation personnel in Africa. Information and communication technology is also critical for business development. UNDP, through its Internet Initiative for Africa, is providing technical expertise and financing on a 50/50 basis to 10 African countries to strengthen Internet infrastructure and services to accelerate the social and economic development of Africa, and promote private sector development.

Investing in human resources

29. UNESCO is supporting the development of human resources through the establishment of multi-purpose community telecentres with the aim of assessing the potential of community radio as a way to overcome access challenges in under-privileged communities and share the benefits of new information and communication technology to mitigate the digital divide. Currently, such pilot centres have been established in five African countries for which funding has been obtained. UNESCO has also established Chairs in some African universities with the aim of strengthening knowledge transfer and capacity-building through North-South and South-South cooperation. The World Intellectual Property Organization has been developing programmes for African universities and research and development institutions with the aim of promoting technological improvements in their economies.

30. Investing in human resources in Africa must also take into account gender equality and equity. In this context, ECA is assisting senior officials from national agencies in African countries in gender analysis and policy formulation, the reorientation of programmes for women's empowerment, capacity-building for the role of women leaders in policy formulation, and awareness-raising for decision makers and policy makers on the need to integrate gender perspectives into national budgetary processes. Empowering refugees and returnees through access to education and skills development is a crucial element for peace, security and long-term socio-economic development. UNHCR, together with UNESCO and the International Telecommunication Union, has established multi-purpose community telecentres in the United Republic of Tanzania, run by refugee women. The centres aim to enhance assistance for information on health, education and communication for refugees and local residents. A higher learning institution in South Africa has launched the African Refugee Scholarship Programme under the Education Protocol of the South African Development Community, aimed at, inter alia, contributing to the education and skills development of African refugees.

Public health priorities

31. Communicable diseases are the major killers in the African region. The World Health Organization (WHO) is promoting the signing of protocols of cooperation in epidemic prevention and control and the adoption of a regional strategy on integrated disease surveillance by African health ministers. HIV/AIDS is one of the most serious diseases hindering the growth and development of the Africa region, especially sub-Saharan Africa. In view of the seriousness of the disease, all key organizations of the United Nations system have now mainstreamed HIV/AIDS into their projects and programmes. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) has developed the "Access to Care" programme in partnership with WHO, the World Bank, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and pharmaceutical companies to make HIV/AIDS care and treatment affordable to a large number of people in need. Some pharmaceutical companies have agreed to reduce drastically the price of drugs for the treatment of HIV/AIDS in developing countries, including Africa. The World Bank recently committed $1 billion for multi-country HIV/AIDS programmes (MAP 1 and 2) for Africa to increase significantly access to HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support programmes in sub-Saharan Africa. Under the MAP process, 12 countries have received financial and technical support for their national HIV/AIDS strategies from the first stage of the programme which was approved by the World Bank in September 2001. It is anticipated that another 12 or more African countries will benefit from MAP 2, which includes support for a pilot programme to use anti-retroviral therapy.

32. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria is now operational, launched at the initiative of the Secretary-General. The Fund has managed to mobilize about $700 million, which is far below the goal of $7-10 billion a year. The Fund recently

announced grants worth $378 million over two years to fight the diseases in 31 developing countries, mostly African countries, and will approve additional grants worth $238 million. The demand for global AIDS grants far exceeds the available resources. Thus one of the challenges that the Fund is facing is to raise the resources needed from donors, the private sector and corporations, including non-governmental organizations. **The Secretary-General may wish to urge the international community to build up the Fund to the target level.**

Eliminating all forms of discrimination against women

33. The Secretariat continues to encourage African countries to ratify or accede to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Only three African countries are yet to ratify the Convention and it is hoped that they will do so during the forthcoming session of the General Assembly. A number of key organizations of the United Nations system are assisting African countries in building their capacity to implement the Convention. In an effort to increase African women's access to productive resources, such as land, UNFPA has successfully supported, through its "food for cultivation" programmes, groups of women who negotiated access to land in their communities. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs has initiated a project aimed at enhancing skills of women public administrators and helping women's machinery in African Governments, for the purpose of eliminating discrimination against women in the public service. UNICEF, among other key United Nations agencies, is supporting the 10-year Girls' Education Initiative in Africa which aims to improve girls' access to education and reduce the gender gap prevailing in many African countries.

Restructuring international aid

34. Some progress has been made in restructuring aid. The recent decision by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development countries to untie aid to the least developed countries, the majority being in Africa, is encouraging. There is, however, the need for further action to improve the quality, effectiveness and coordination of aid to ensure that aid is driven by the requirements of the recipients. The announcement made by the Group of Eight leaders at their meeting in Kananaskis, Canada, in July 2002, that they would direct to African nations with good governance records half or more of their new development assistance pledged at the International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, Mexico, in March 2002 is a positive development in terms of supporting the objectives of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), an African-owned and African-led initiative. However, such commitments need to be followed up. The proposal by United States President Bush on disbursing part of International Development Association funds as grants to poor countries, including those in Africa, is also a welcome initiative. The timely implementation of the agreement to untie aid to least developed countries, announced at the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, will enhance aid effectiveness in these countries in Africa and will increase the amount of aid resources retained by them. **The Secretary-General, in his advocacy role for African development, may wish to urge donors to extend this agreement also to African countries which are not least developed countries, as development assistance remains a vital source of external financing in Africa. He may also wish further to urge the donor community to double official flows to Africa, in line with the recommendation made at the March 2002 meeting of the High-level Committee on Programmes of the United Nations system Chief Executives Board for Coordination, formerly the Administrative Committee on Coordination.**

Reducing the debt burden

35. Some progress has been made in debt relief, as several African least developed countries have benefited from the conversion of official debts into grants. As of June 2002, 23 African countries are benefiting from relief for heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC). To date, 5 African countries, namely, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Mozambique, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania, have reached their completion points, another 17 have reached decision points under the enhanced HIPC debt initiative and one country has reached its decision point under the original HIPC framework. The debt stocks of these countries as a whole will fall significantly after the full application of traditional debt relief mechanisms and assistance under the HIPC initiative. A number of creditors have also gone beyond Cologne terms in the

context of the Paris Club and provided for full cancellation of eligible debt. The issue of debt relief to Africa, inter alia, also received some positive consideration at the last summit of the Group of Eight held in Kananaskis, in June 2002.

36. Notwithstanding some progress in the HIPC initiative, the process is slow, the procedures are cumbersome and debt relief is linked to adjustment programmes, including the preparation of Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. The initiative does not cover many middle and low-income African countries. These efforts notwithstanding, **the Secretary-General may wish further to urge the creditors to find a lasting solution to addressing the debt situation of not only African heavily indebted poor countries, but also other heavily indebted African countries. It is also important that HIPC relief not be offset by reductions in other aid flows.**

Opening international markets

37. There have been some improvements in the generalized system of preferences scheme and other trading arrangements made by developed countries. The Cotonou Agreement concluded by the European Union with the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) (in 2000), the European Union "Everything but Arms" initiative (2001), the United States Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (2000) and related initiatives by Canada and Japan are welcome steps in providing better market access to African products. These commendable measures notwithstanding, the prevalence of non-tariff barriers, tariff peaks and subsidies in developed countries continue to impede the export of African agricultural products. More needs to be done by the industrial countries in providing better market access and reducing trade barriers to African exports. African countries also need assistance for the diversification of their economies.

38. Many African countries have weak institutional capacities in trade negotiations. The UNCTAD plan for technical assistance to developing countries places special emphasis on the least developed countries and African countries for the Post-Doha Agenda. UNCTAD, the International Trade Centre and the World Trade Organization have continued to provide technical assistance to eight African countries on trade-related questions in the context of the Joint Integrated Technical Assistance Programme for Selected Least Developed Countries and other African Countries. UNDP Africa, in cooperation with UNCTAD, has implemented the "fast track" module of the Capacity-Building for Trade and Development project, which provided advisory support and analyses for the preparation of the Doha meeting in November 2001 and for the elaboration of options on a new regime with the European Union and the Cotonou Agreement in collaboration with the ACP secretariat.

Support for regional cooperation and integration

39. Subregional and regional cooperation and economic integration can effectively promote, inter alia, economic discipline, sound macroeconomic policy and confidence-building links between neighbouring countries. In this context, the UNDP Zambia's growth triangle initiative, involving the three neighbouring countries of Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia, in association with some regional, bilateral and United Nations organizations, is supporting the implementation of the initiative which aims to alleviate poverty and increase economic growth by enhancing productivity and accelerate planned efforts to promote cross-border investment and the freer movement of people, goods and services. In 2001, UNIDO initiated a regional programme for facilitating the trade participation of least developed countries in Africa which aimed to enhance standards, testing, metrology and the promotion of quality. UNIDO has also signed an agreement with the West African Monetary and Economic Union (WAEMU) on the regional programme (with a budget of 12.5 million euros) supporting the establishment of accreditation and standardization, and a quality promotion system in WAEMU countries. The third African Development Forum, organized by ECA in March 2002, focused on regional cooperation and economic integration for Africa's accelerated growth and development. Progress in this area has been rather slow. The launching of the African Union will accelerate regional cooperation and integration.

Harmonizing current international and bilateral initiatives

40. The need to harmonize the multitude of initiatives on Africa has been echoed at various forums, with a view to enhancing their impact on African development. The Administrative Committee on

Coordination, at its April 2001 meeting, affirmed that there would be no new United Nations initiatives on Africa and pledged coordinated system-wide support for African-owned and African-led initiatives. Reinforcing this issue at its March 2002 meeting, the High-level Committee on Programmes recommended to the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination that it address, inter alia, a coordinated United Nations system approach to support NEPAD. It also recommended that efforts be made to use and build up on existing United Nations mechanisms at the national and regional levels as well as other regional mechanisms to implement NEPAD. The special high-level meeting during the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, scheduled for 16 September 2002, will provide a forum for the commitment of the international community, including the United Nations system, to a coordinated response and support for the implementation of NEPAD.

IV. Concluding observations

41. The report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council clearly articulates and underscores the link between peace and sustainable development in Africa. NEPAD also underlines peace and stability, good governance, democracy and respect for human rights as preconditions for development. By adopting NEPAD, African leaders have acknowledged this link and committed themselves to strengthening the continent's capacity for conflict prevention, management and resolution. They are also increasing their resolve to promote democracy and human rights in their respective countries by developing clear standards for accountability, transparency and participatory governance. The voluntary establishment of the African Peer Review Mechanism to monitor progress in compliance with such standards demonstrates the resolve of African leaders to achieve these objectives. African Governments are increasingly enabling civil society, including women's organizations, to work in partnership with Governments in promoting peace, security and development in Africa. These are welcome developments which will further contribute to the implementation of the recommendations in the report of the Secretary-General and deserve the resolute support of the international community.

42. Following the 1998 report of the Secretary-General, the international community increasingly recognized the importance of addressing conflict prevention and resolution issues in Africa, as well as the linkages between relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and long-term development for peace-building in the region. The debate on conflict prevention and peace and development in Africa has been taken up actively in the principal organs of the United Nations, implementation of the recommendations of the report is being followed up by the Ad Hoc Working Group of the General Assembly, and the recently established Ad Hoc Working Group of the Security Council on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa. The forthcoming establishment of the Economic and Social Council ad hoc advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict is in response to recognition that a comprehensive and holistic approach embracing actions in a wide range of areas, including political, humanitarian and human rights areas, institutional measures and the promotion of development efforts, is required for conflict prevention and peace-building. In this regard, the Economic and Social Council has an important role to play, together with the General Assembly, in the effective implementation of conflict prevention and recovery strategies.

43. Since the submission of the previous report of the Secretary-General in 2001, progress has been made towards restoring peace and stability in the region. The peace process in Ethiopia and Eritrea is being consolidated and the Great Lakes region is showing signs of stability, though the subregion is far from being stable. Angola, after the death of the rebel leader, is moving towards peace with the signing of the peace treaty between the Government and the rebels in raising hopes for a possible end to the longest civil war in Africa. Sierra Leone held its successful elections in May 2002, restoring democracy in that country. However, the situation in Liberia is worrying as the crisis is spreading to Guinea, thus causing concern for the fragile peace in Sierra Leone.

44. Despite the difficult environment, economic growth in Africa averaged about 3.1 per cent in 2001 and some 15 African countries achieved a more than 5 per cent growth rate. Notwithstanding the positive growth rate, this falls short of the 7 per cent annual growth rate necessary to achieve the millennium development goal of halving poverty by 2015. Sub-

Saharan Africa will not achieve this goal unless an accelerated growth rate is achieved and sustained. Sub-Saharan Africa will also be behind other regions in achieving the remaining goals. Aid to Africa is declining despite the efforts of African Governments towards better growth and poverty reduction programmes. Their efforts need to be rewarded. Nowhere is the need for enhanced financial resources more evident than in Africa where the scourges of poverty and HIV/AIDS, among other social and economic upheavals, are two of the critical challenges facing the region.

45. The Group of Eight Africa Action Plan adopted at Kananaskis provides a framework for future cooperation and the engagement of the industrial countries with Africa in the implementation of NEPAD. It is hoped that such enhanced cooperation will culminate, inter alia, in a substantial additional increase in aid resources, the improved market access of African goods by reducing or eliminating tariff and non-tariff barriers as well as reducing or eliminating agricultural subsidies, an end to the practice of tying aid to donor exports, and assistance to small and medium-sized enterprises to stimulate private sector development in Africa. On its part, the United Nations will continue to support African development priorities within the framework of the Partnership.

Notes

[1] The General Assembly requested the already established interdepartmental/inter-agency task force on the causes of conflict in Africa to provide Member States, on an annual basis, with updated matrices on the current status of the implementation of the various recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on Africa.

[2] Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UN-Habitat, United Nations Environment Programme, World Food Programme, United Nations Development Programme, World Bank, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.